

796 occasions like a marriage or an ancestor-propitiation, then the house
778 is purified after their departure.

783 The sacredness or ritual purity of the ancestral house was better
[84] preserved by the fact that a woman was not allowed to stay within
it during her periods. Such a woman is in a defiled condition and
defilement is contagious. It also cuts off the person affected by it
from normal participation in social life.

841 Every ancestral house has an outhouse called *ālē porē* in which
a woman stayed for three days during her periods. She attained
normal ritual status only on the fourth day after taking a bath.
During her periods she had to avoid going near people and objects
in a condition of normal ritual status.

761 The death of even an unrelated adult in the house defiles it and
783 the members of the particular household. After the corpse is
removed, both the house and the members of the household have
to be purified.

778 Certain parts of the ancestral house are more sacred than the
788 others. The central hall is very sacred. In the western wall of the
central hall is a niche in which burns an earthen or metal lamp.
The container is filled with oil, and there is a cotton wick, one end
of which comes through the lamp's lip while the rest trails in the
oil held by the container. The wick is lit just beyond the lip, and
[823] the lamp burns with the lip facing east, the sacred direction. This
lamp is called *nellakki boḷuk* (central-hall lamp). It is lit every
morning and evening by a woman of the house who salutes it after
lighting it. It will be referred to as wall-lamp throughout this book.

[354] A bell-metal lamp, hung from the ceiling of the central hall, is a
common sight in Coorg houses. It is called *tūg boḷuk* or hanging
lamp, and it is saluted on all ritual occasions. Shri K. J. Chengappa
considers the wall-lamp to be the more ancient and more sacred
of the two lamps.

778 The south-western room (*kanni kōmbarē kōṇē*) and the kitchen
(*umbala manē*) are very sacred parts of the ancestral house. The
south-western direction is a sacred direction, and the south-
western pillar (*kanni kamba*) in the central court of a quadrangular
house receives ritual respect. On certain occasions like an ancestor-
769 propitiation, a lamp is lit in the south-western room. The kitchen
is sacred as food is cooked there: food ought to be cooked in a pure
place and care is taken to see that impure persons and objects do
not get into the kitchen. Sometimes the periodical offerings of food

V

It is not only places which have ritual value, but also points of 823 the compass. East is a sacred direction because the sun rises there, 776 and Hindus in all parts of India regard the sun as a deity.

The ancestral house faces east and so does the ancestor-shrine. [342] The lip of the sacred wall-lamp in the central hall faces east. The subject of a *mangala* ceremony sits facing east.

On getting up from his bed in the morning a Coorg salutes the [782] wall-lamp and the sun. The cultivation of rice is accompanied by [243] ritual at every stage, and on all these ritual occasions the subject of the rites begins by saluting the sun.

South is an inauspicious or bad-sacred direction. A corpse is [764] buried or cremated with its head towards south. In Sanskrit Hinduism, south is the abode of Yama, the god of death.

Coorgs, like Hindus in other parts of India, regard east as a good-sacred direction and south as a bad-sacred direction. East is associated with Chūriya (sun-god), and south with Yama. Both these deities have an All-India spread. Coorgs worship these two deities along with other Hindus all over India. The possession of [184] common values binds people together and Coorgs form a single community with Hindus all over India when they worship the same deities.

VI

Mūrta is the crucial part of *mangala*, and the rites performed 796 prior to *mūrta* prepare the subject for it. The subject is shaved by 305 the barber, given a bath by three married women, and dressed in 292 ritual robes and ornaments before sitting down to *mūrta*. Shaving, the first of several preparatory rites, will be briefly considered here.

It is necessary to repeat here that shaving is done by barbers [584] who form a caste. Contact with the barber defiles a member of a [283] higher caste, and consequently shaving is invariably followed by a purificatory bath.

The subject of *mangala* wears a white cotton *kupya* while he is being shaved by the barber. The *kupya* is like a dressing-gown, and it is either black or white. The white gown is of cotton, has long sleeves, and covers the neck up to the throat. This is the traditional ritual dress of Coorgs. The black gown is a Westernized version of

Yerawa AW62—
Kurumba AW56

— 24 —

C
137 delicate light green foliage of linear lanceolate leaves a most graceful feathery appearance. When in blossom the bamboo is leafless and the extremities are covered with flowers like one large compound panicle. The seed is in size and appearance like oats or small paddy. It is eaten by the poorer classes, but considered unwholesome. The birds and rats, however, revel in the feast of plenty. The water into which bamboo seed has largely fallen is said to be particularly noxious.

Y
K
313 The cutting of bamboo, is a difficult task that is rarely well done by any other than those expert jungle people, the Yerawas and Kurumbas. For the purpose of cutting a single reed they manage to climb over the lower thorny mass to where the reeds branch out freely about 10 or 15 feet above the ground and cut them at that height. To level the whole clump, the Yerawa has to cut the stem of each bamboo below and above his head, removing each piece from the thorny embrace of the rest; he thus boldly advances into the clump, and the further he progresses in his work the greater is the danger of the whole clump suddenly giving way at the slightest breeze and crushing the unfortunate intruder.

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137 There are several kinds of bamboo, the one described is, however, the most common. The reeds of another kind are much smaller and solid and are known by the name of Male-bamboos.

C
137 313 One of the handsomest trees in the eastern jungles is the Blackwood or *Dalbergia latifolia* with a stem of 2 or 3 feet in diameter and 60 to 80 feet in height. It is one of the most valuable timber trees in India and little, if at all, inferior to the South American Rosewood, which it closely resembles in many particulars. Near neighbours of Blackwood are *Matti* and *Hony*. The *Matti* or *Terminalia coriacea* is remarkable for its excellent timber, and is easily recognised by its thick ash-coloured bark, cracked into small tablets like the scales

788 here with firm grasp a husband drags his timid spouse along
 783 the rock and into the caldron; and even the tender babe at
 his mother's breast is brought within the influence of the bath.
 Dripping and shivering the bathers force their way back
 through the new arrivals and seek a sunny spot to change
 their garments. The pressure is great, the path slippery,
 and the confusion and pressure² alarming. According to
 [177] Brahminical superstition the colour of the water in the cal-
 [823] dron indicates the intensity of the guilt of the bathing pil-
 grim. The darker its hue the greater the guilt, and yet the
 phenomenon depends only on the accident, whether the fall-
 ing water is intercepted by the bodies of the bathers or whether
 it reaches the basin directly, and by the force of its fall is
 beaten into foam.

788 After bathing the pilgrims assemble at about 4 o'clock in
 793 the temple, where a Brahmin dances before the idol shrine
 798 with a brass image of Isvara upon his head; another Brahmin
 177 with a plate receives the small money offerings, and a third
 distributes Prasāda i. e. flowers and globules of sandal. The
 native officials first make their obeisance, the most devoted
 amongst them even the Śāshtāngam i. e. touching the ground
 with the 8 members of the body, and then offer their gift.
 This temple possesses 2,000 batties of rice-land and annually
 receives on this festive occasion Rupees 400 from Govern-
 ment! The origin of Irpu and Hérumālu-jātrē is based upon
 a common Brahminical legend:—One day when Rāma, with
 his followers, was living in this place, his younger brother
 Lakshmana in a fit of madness insulted him by returning the
 bow and arrows which Lakshmana some time before had re-
 ceived from Rāma. Repenting of his rashness, Lakshmana
 asked forgiveness, offering at the same time to throw himself
 into a large fire as an expiation for his crime. He shot an
 arrow against the foot of the Irpu rocks, when a large fire
 flared up into which he threw himself. In order to save his

² [Errata: the words "and pressure" should
 be omitted. See corrigenda, cat. 116,
 p. 493 - ANALYST]

and gifts due to them, have met with singularly bad success. 538
 The Coorgs, it would appear, never troubled themselves much 193
 about the contents and the admonitions of the Kávéri book, 197
 and, though the translation of it was designed to make it
 accessible to them, it is so highly spiced with Sanscrit and old
 Canarese expressions, that few do understand it.

The Kávéri-Purána seeks to glorify the holy river. Its [823] •
 divine origin, its connection with the Rishi Agastya, (the
 settler of the Vindhya-mountain-range, the great son of both
 Mitra and Varuna), and its course through the eastern country
 into the sea in obedience to the counsel of Agastya, all con-
 spire to give it a character of surpassing sanctity.

The seizure of the Amrita, the produce of the ocean- 539
 churning by the Asuras, spread consternation and despair 197
 among the hosts of the gods. They invoked the great Vishnu,
 the lord of all. He had compassion on them. From him
 Móhini emanated,—Lakshmi at the same time sending forth
 Lópámudre (a form of Párvati),—charmed the Asuras by her
 transcendent beauty, and restored the drink of immortality
 to the gods. After having delivered the gods, she retired
 to Brahmagiri—where the sources of the Kávéri now are—and
 was changed into a rocky cave. Lópámudre was given to
 Brahma, who brought her up as his daughter. Thus ends
 the first act, the scene (true Purána fashion) being laid in the
 heavens. The second act passes to the earth. Kávéri Muni
 retires to Brahmagiri, there to give himself wholly to medi-
 tation on Brahma. He asks Brahma for children. Brahma—
 how could he refuse the prayer of his devout Rishi?—gives
 him Lópámudre for a daughter. She, in order to procure
 beatitude for her new father, resolves on becoming a river,
 pouring out blessings on the earth, and all the merits arising
 from this course of devoted goodness, are to be appropriated
 to Kávéri Muni. For this purpose she resorts to one of the
 heights of Brahmagiri and invokes Brahma, to give her the